

elevated teaching to meet world-class standards.

In the wake of the worst recession since the Great Depression, the trust stepped up and distributed \$11.4 million in Unity Challenge grants to meet the needs of Chicago's most vulnerable citizens. The grants supplied food to more than 800 soup kitchens and food pantries. The trust helped expand capacity at homeless shelters and bought winter coats for children. The trust put money in community health centers and helped seniors pay for their prescription medications. The recession was hard on Chicago, but the business and community leaders at the Chicago Community Trust made sure that the community took care of its own.

This month, the trust is launching its centennial campaign, starting with the return of "On the Table," a forum that brings together thousands of Chicago residents to share a meal and talk about how they can work together to make the community stronger, safer, and more dynamic. Last year, nearly 12,000 people participated from every Chicago neighborhood and 11 neighboring counties. This year, the trust is expecting to at least double the number of people participating.

I congratulate the Chicago Community Trust on 100 years strengthening the community. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do to make Chicago a great and caring community.

VOTER REGISTRATION MODERNIZATION ACT

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I am proud to join Senator GILLIBRAND in support of the introduction of the Voter Registration Modernization Act of 2015. This bill would improve the fabric of our democracy and bring our election procedures into the 21st century by eradicating barriers to voter registration and expanding access to the franchise for millions of voters who were previously unregistered to vote. I thank Senator GILLIBRAND for her leadership on this issue.

The right to vote is the bedrock of our democracy. In our representative form of government, the right to participate in the democratic process is fundamental to who we are and what we believe. That is, our belief in being a nation grounded in the idea of equal justice under law. Voting is a fundamental right because it is preservative of all other rights. Without access to the ballot, our civil rights and freedoms of religion, speech, and press could be eroded and our faith that those rights will be fully protected lost.

In 2012, our Nation witnessed cracks in the foundation of our democracy. Millions of people watched television coverage of our presidential election in disgust as voters stood in lines for hours, mainly due to problems with the paper-based voter registration system. No American in the 21st century should have to use paper ballots or stand in

lines for hours in order to exercise their fundamental right to vote. The President's bipartisan commission to improve the election process concluded that no voter should have to wait more than 30 minutes to vote. We should be making voting easier, not harder. We can begin that process by ensuring that States modernize their voter registration process and give citizens the choice to register to vote online.

When the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 was passed two decades ago, the revolution in data sharing and integration was just beginning. It is time to incorporate the commonplace experience of online transactions into the election process. By implementing online voter registration, the Voter Registration Modernization Act addresses a key problem with paper-based systems—the inaccurate transfer of information to election authorities. This bill would ensure that voters' votes count and help election authorities who rely on accurate voter registration lists to better detect problems.

Currently, 20 States have online voter registration systems. One of the greatest benefits we have seen so far is the saving of taxpayers' money. Arizona, for example, which launched the Nation's first online voter registration system, saved its taxpayers almost \$1.4 million. Kansas noted no expenses at all. It is now time for the Federal Government to follow their lead and adopt these common-sense, cost cutting reforms.

The Voter Registration Modernization Act amends the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 to provide for online voter registration systems. It provides funding for States to implement the bill and directs the National Institute of Standards and Technology to conduct an ongoing study on best practices for Internet registration. With passage of this bill, States are required to adopt pro-technology measures, including taking steps to ensure the online availability of voter registration forms, provide online assistance, and allow voters to update registration information online.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice." But that arc does not bend towards justice without effort. We must put in the necessary hard work—and build the foundation and infrastructure—for justice to prevail. We can improve the health of our democracy by supporting this critical legislation, which would expand the ballot and update our voting technology. I urge all Senators to support the Voter Registration Modernization Act of 2015.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

At 3:07 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Novotny, one of its reading clerks, announced that the House has passed the following bill and joint resolution, in which it requests the concurrence of the Senate:

H.R. 2029. An act making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

H.J. Res. 43. Joint resolution disapproving the action of the District of Columbia Council in approving the Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Amendment Act of 2014.

The message also announced that the House has agreed to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two Houses on the amendment of the House of Representatives to the resolution (S. Con. Res. 11) setting forth the congressional budget for the United States Government for fiscal year 2016 and setting forth the appropriate budgetary levels for fiscal years 2017 through 2025.

MEASURES REFERRED

The following bill and joint resolution were read the first and the second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

H.R. 2029. An act making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Appropriations.

H.J. Res. 43. Joint resolution disapproving the action of the District of Columbia Council in approving the Reproductive Health Non-Discrimination Amendment Act of 2014; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. INHOFE, from the Committee on Environment and Public Works, without amendment:

S. 261. A bill to designate the United States courthouse located at 200 NW 4th Street in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, as the William J. Holloway, Jr. United States Courthouse.

S. 612. A bill to designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 1300 Victoria Street in Laredo, Texas, as the "George P. Kazen Federal Building and United States Courthouse".

S. 1034. A bill to designate the United States courthouse located at 501 East Court Street in Jackson, Mississippi, as the "Charles Clark United States Courthouse".